

For nearly 30 years, India and Bangladesh have argued over control of New Moore, a tiny rock island in the Bay of Bengal. Both claimed the empty territory, which is about two miles long and 1.5 miles wide. No permanent structures occupied the land, but India sent paramilitary soldiers to its rocky shores in 1981 to host a national flag. Now, rising sea levels have resolved the dispute for both parties: the island is gone. New Moore has been completely submerged, confirmed by satellite imagery and sea patrols. The demarcation of the maritime boundary – and who controls the remaining islands – however, remains an open issue between the two south Asian neighbours, and the disappearance of the island does nothing to resolve it.

A State is a statement, declared in words, instantiation and performance of historical decree. It is immobile and static, the opposite of that which is variable and dynamic. Negotiations and settlements are what the state enacts, but its existence must remain unquestioned and unquestionable. It is the state that makes territories legible, that arranges populations and the land in ways that simplify functions of taxation, conscription and the prevention of the questioning of the state. The state is teleological, and like all tautologies, it is circular, cyclical and incapable.

ESCAPE STATE

“The Common People of England have begun, and gives Consent to Digge up!” The True Levellers – later also known as the Diggers – were a group of protestant radicals formed in 1649 in England, whose name derives from their attempts to farm on common land. The Diggers tried to reform the existing social order by literally “leveling” land. Believing in economic equality, they promoted an agrarian lifestyle and created small egalitarian rural communities, where they claimed the collective use of forests and lands, against the landowner’s entitlement to private use. They envisioned an ecological interrelationship between humans and nature, and declared that “true freedom lies where a man receives his nourishment and preservation, and that is in the use of the earth”. Subject to repeated attacks, the diggers’ communities in England lasted only until 1650.

The changing course of the Danube, the most important international waterway in its continent, has left several parcels of (former) Serbian territory on the west bank of the river – which Serbia says should now rightly be Croatian. Croatia, however, rejects the Serbian interpretation of the parcel which is called Gornja Siga – as this area is referred to on some maps – is not Croatia. It was therefore *terra nullius*, a no man’s land, until Vuk Josićić – the first to spot this bizarre no-man’s-land – seized the opportunity and on 13 April 2015 formed a new state in this territory – Liberland. “Free Republic of Liberland is a sovereign state located between Croatia and Serbia on the west bank of the Danube river. Its total area of approximately 7 km² is the nation’s smallest sovereign state, after the Vatican and Monaco. The motto of Liberland is ‘To live and let live’. Liberland prides itself on personal and economic freedom of its people, which is guaranteed by its Constitution, which significantly limits the power of politicians so they could not interfere too much in the freedom of the Liberland nation.” The current human population of Gornja Siga is zero.

ESCAPE GOVERNMENT

A Government is the governing power in a given place; governance is the “act or manner of governing” a territory. Both however come from the Latin *gubernāre*, “to steer”, and the Greek *kubernáo*, “directing the movement of a vessel”, “steer”. The original context of the word is nautical. We are at sea.

ESCAPE INSTITUTIONS

The Seasteading Institute is a nonprofit funded in Silicon Valley begun 2008 by Patrick Friedman (Milton Friedman’s grandson) and venture capitalist Peter Thiel to build floating libertarian nation. They promote experiments and innovations in governance, they “seek to enable seasteading communities - Floating Cities - which will allow the next generation of pioneers to peacefully test new ideas for government”. The most successful – they hope – could then inspire change in governments around the world. A group of key people withdrew from society, escape from their governments, and take to the sea. Opening humanity’s next frontier, however, doesn’t seem to go further than the territorial waters of an existing nation. Historically, the Seasteading Institute has looked to international waters for the freedom to establish new nations and spur competitive governance from the outside. However, they are now seeking a host nation, as it is less expensive to engineer a seastead for shallow waters, it is easier for residents to travel to and from the seastead, and “a host nation [would] provide a place for a floating city within the existing international legal framework, with the associated protections and responsibilities”.

THE MOST IMPORTANT BRANCHES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WERE THE ONES OF CARETAKERS OF DYKES, AND FOLDERS, OR PUMPS AND MILLS, OF FLOOD AND MEADERS. — BRUNO LAUTOU

Escapes from the productive efficiencies and industrial effectiveness of modern times can be exemplified through movements, both genuine and performative, relating to food (artisanal bread), social structure (communal living) and repair (maintenance over novelty and attempts at working, playing, resist and attending to senses like sight, sound and feel) over working on the outside of bureaucracies and with baffling, opaque machines.

ESCAPE MODERNITY

What kind of exit could we, as moderns, propose from modernity? From the medievalists, an intent to perform historical bypass surgery. From postmodernism a plan and (largely derided) attempts at accelerating and modulating modernist tendencies across cultures and hemispheres. For most, modernity is “essential for us, and for this reason it is ultimately inaccessible to us” (Zelinski). Modernity is inescapable, a geographic fallacy expanding into realms and geographies unknown...

ESCAPE TERRITORY

The sovereign state is fully, flatly, and evenly operative over each square centimetre of a legally demarcated territory. With the word “territory” we usually refer to the land and waters belonging to or under the jurisdiction of a sovereign state. It comes from “terra”, “earth”, “land”, as in “territain”, but it also resonates with the Latin word *terrene*, “to frighten”; a “territorium” is a combination of land and law, “a place from which people are warned off”.

In Toulouse, France, on 20 May 1980, an organized left-wing terrorist group calling itself CLODO (Coité Liquidatou et Détournant les Ordinateurs, French word for ‘trap’) and a group calling itself the “Direct Action Organisation of March 27-28” claimed responsibility for the destruction of computer systems and data during an attack on Philips Data Systems. Their statement to the left-wing newspaper Liberation stated: “We are workers in the field of data processing and consequently well placed to know the current and future dangers of data processing and telecommunications. The computer is the favorite tool of the dominant. It is used to exploit, to put on file, to control, and to repress. We do not want to be shut up in ghettos of programs and organizational patterns.” Members of the two terrorist organisations collected computer programs and magnetic data cards in the toilets of the offices, yet instead of releasing this data to the sewers, where “the filth takes off its shirt, absolute madness, rout of illnesses and of airings” (Victor Hugo), they simply burned everything.

ESCAPE DATA

The etymology of the word “data” comes from the Latin nominative plural of *datus* (“that is given”), neuter past participle of *do* (“give”). As a word it points towards reciprocity, giving and being given, things left and found. We would like to escape from being captured yet cling to the attention of the database, collect our moments but not be collected as moments. As long as we are given, we also have to give. As long as we are listening, we will be overheard. “You hear fights, you smell dinner, you hear people making love. You hear intimate gasp floating down. You hear the radio. An air shift is one big loud speaker” (Duke Ellington).

ESCAPE TECHNOLOGY

Where precisely are we to find this distinct “natural” or “human” realm supposed to exist outside of the technological? We have never had an “outside” to retreat to, and so must admit the co-originary nature of modern technological beings and their human counterparts; admit an inescapable condition, forever ours to flourish or perish within. On one hand, the traditional, ancient, modern, technical, and non-technical practices of the real capacities of technical objects into a great, evil beyond, outside of human understanding or control. Such arguments often over-emphasize technology in their glossing of detail, their inability or unwillingness to comprehend, a masochistic, delusional negative-fetish. How did we get to the point where we speak of technology as something transcendent, when technical ensembles, no matter how complex, are composed of the (usually fairly mundane) work of individuals and collectives, engaged in technical work? That produces institutions, just as culture does not act surreptitiously behind our backs but is produced by us in each instance and interaction. The intricate and often fragile patterns of stabilising relationships that stabilise institutions (internal/external) are pervasive. They deeply affect individual behavior and inspire personal attachments. They are difficult entities to locate or describe categorically or simply. Institutions are the infrastructure of social contracts and behaviour, concretisations of social values, constitutive relationally through practices. Strategies for removing oneself from institutional hegemony, sovereignty or affordance through disengagement need to be replaced with better and sustained attempts to modulate, reformulate and invent reconstituted institutional forms.

From the late 1970s until the mid 1990s, “the Unabomber”, who’s real name was Ted Kaczynski, waged a nationwide bombing campaign in the United States against sites he deemed “centers of civilization” and “the embodiment of technological progress. He was personally responsible for the killing of three people and injured twenty three others. Kaczynski’s manifesto, “The Industrial Society and Its Future”, contains passages such as: “the system does not and cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system. This has nothing to do with the political or social ideology that may pretend to guide the technological system. It is not the fault of capitalism and it is not the fault of socialism. It is the fault of technology, because the system is guided not by ideology but by technical necessity.”

On December 3, 1999, in Monte Carlo, Monaco, the multimillionaire banker Ronald S. Lauder, along with one of his nurses, died of asphyxiation in a locked, bunker-like bathroom built into his penthouse. Early accounts said that two hooded intruders had penetrated the apartment, which was as solid as a fortress. The bizarre death made headlines everywhere and sent shock waves through the banking community, as well as through the principality of Monaco, probably the safest, most tightly controlled haven in the world for the very rich. At any moment during the catastrophe he might have saved himself, but he was reportedly so fearful of being murdered by the intruders he had been told were in his house that he refused to come out of the locked bathroom, in spite of the pleas of firemen and police.

ESCAPE VIOLENCE

A panic room is useless if the house it’s in is burning down. A panic room is like a sanctuary, a shelter, a hiding place, a medieval castle keep, Warlike bunkers, places where we attempt exit from things unsafe. These are the featured architectures of paranoia, places for self-concealment that we feel better knowing exist from both broadcasts are made. A fortified safe room must always, continuously be connected to its outside. The panic room gives way to panic. What are safe spaces if not a last resort? Self-imprisonment? A pure violence, against an impossible idea of security. Once we’re in, will we ever want out?

AS SHOWN AS YOU HEAR, GOREL’S TERRITORIAL WATERS, YOU CAN ENTER THE GREAT HERD OF BARRING OUR SELF-DRIVING BODY THROUGH THIS THERMIDOR TO ALL FEDERAL ZONE PROVIDING DRIVING YOUR OWNEMENT. THIS INCLUDES THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF YOUR SWEAT. — MATY MONDO

ESCAPE HUMAN

Unforeseen and unforeseeable effects would seem to threaten our definition of what it means to be a human being. We are losing our perceived dominance of Earth at times purposefully enacting our own self-extinction, while extinguishing other species that cannot survive a world we rapidly change. We shall have to adapt, or rather our adaption, our mutation, is already underway. There is little to decide, little re-mission, little option to be always already part of ongoing transformations, technological, ecological, biological. Do we want to become more, or less, alien than we already are? Embracing new post-human belongings involves halting privilege and relating the suffocating grip we have come to have on this world. In learning to let go of humanity, how might we become yet still more, yet ever more, human?

ESCAPE CLIMATE

Alongside the reconfiguration of subject positioning and subjective sensitivities in relation to a “world out there” that was never really out there at all, there is a transformation in what regards the cultures of technology and technological culture, as they become more ubiquitous, vascularised and always-on. These infrastructural aspects of technology create a new field of material and immaterial conditions and possibilities. Of course each of these nations has its own predatory nature. Fusser notes how, “We may be oppressed by culture on a higher level than we are by nature – do cave bears and hall storms oppress us more than the secret police and thermonuclear weapons?”

ESCAPE INFRASTRUCTURE

THE BELIEF THAT TECHNOLOGY WAS SUPPOSED TO BRING FREEDOM FROM Austerity and the idea of the 1950s that we all CHAINED TO FACTORY MACHINES, BUT NOW SOME OF US CARRY OUR CHAINS AROUND WITH US, IN THE FORM OF LAPTOPS AND PHONES. — BENJAMIN NOYS

We have to look for power sources here, and distribution networks were never taught. Routes of power, our teachers meters whose scales are unknown in the world. Draw your own schematics, getting feedback, making connections, reducing the error, trying to learn the real function... zeroing in on what incalculable float! — THOMAS SPYCHON

As soon as you hear Gorel’s territorial waters, you can enter the Great Herd of Barring our self-driving body through this Thermidor to all Federal Zone providing driving your ownement. This includes the chemical composition of your sweat. — MATY MONDO

In 2009, Colin Beavan (born 1963), an American internet blogger began a project called “No Impact Project”, which involved attempts his family made to live a “zero impact” lifestyle: in the city of New York for one year. The project grew into an international environmental nonprofit and inspired a book, film and blog called “No Impact Man.” For the year-long experiment the Beavan family produced no trash except for compost, bought only foods grown within a 250-mile radius of where they lived, and did not use petroleum-based means of transportation. They also used no paper products, including toilet paper.

NOW THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER – AND ONE HAS NO EYE FOR THAT IN TIMES OF GREAT PERIL, AND ONLY BY A GREAT EFFORT EVEN IN TIMES WHEN DANGER IS THREATENING – IS THAT IN REALITY THE BURROW DOES PROVIDE A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF SECURITY, BUT BY NO MEANS ENOUGH, FOR IS ONE EVER FREE FROM ANXITIES INSIDE IT? THESE ANXITIES ARE DIFFERENT FROM ORDINARY ONES, PROUDER, RICHER IN CONTENT, OFTEN LONG REPRESSED, BUT IN THEIR DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS THEY ARE PERHAPS MUCH THE SAME AS THE ANXITIES THAT EXISTENCE IN THE OUTER WORLD GIVES RISE TO. — FRANK KAFKA

Deserted beaches and dark forests are attractive to escapists. When narrow, crowded sidewalks give way to vast landscapes, an escape has found its beginning. Our mental landscapes clear up when a crowded social landscape clears out. The beach can appear sandboxed, and the ocean can turn into a pond – just add lots and lots of people. We go on vacation, as tourists, and are irritated by tourists. Our desirous exoticism seems to know no bounds, nor find any – what inner feelings of hoping to find an outside give rise to these desires? Do we attempt these escapes only for a return to crowded city streets, where criminals, protesters, outcasts, thieves and the frictions of free thought roam?

ESCAPE SOCIETY

NO WONDER THAT IT WOULD BECOME SO DIFFICULT FOR THE MODERNS TO GET SO ON, IF THEY STOPPED DRIVING, STOOD, THEY FIGHTING, NOTHING BUT THE MEN BEING ESCAPED. “FERRARIHOUND” IS A TERM THAT APPLIES TO ALL ENTITIES. — BRUNO LAUTOU

In 2016, Thomas Thwaites undertook an artistic intervention into the lives and environments more typically occupied by goats. The project, set and published through of his 62-day surrender, the self-proclaimed death candidate has devoted his work to “all starving or fasting people and the anorectics of the world.” The motive for the unusual outsider: a radical withdrawal from neo-toerocracy; consumption and above all: no more participating.

ESCAPE WASTE

Where there is life, there is waste. What goes in comes out, as continuous transformation. There is never nothing at the start, just as something is always left over, a restless remainder. Something always leaks out, sinks, accumulates. Recycling is a remarkable practice, not because it is perfect or moral, as governance tries to tell us, but because it performs pure loss, negatio, the becoming right of everything. Waste is not inert matter, waiting to be discarded or upcycled by humans. Waste is alien matter, or queer matter that “mobilizes relations” (Hird). In these dark residues are forces resisting each other, relating you, resisting us. Holy shit!

ESCAPE GOVERNMENT

For me, this is a possible new path of feminist (and other forms of) minimalist philosophy: how to bring about new minuties, new forms of engagement, not only among ourselves but also with what we animate. Life is possible. — ELISABETH GENSLY

INTEGRITY WILL BE THE NEW CODE WORD. THERE WILL BE NO ‘AWAY’ TOWARDS WHICH WE CAN THROW ANYTHING. (...) IT’S LIKE THE STORY OF ANANIS AND THE TAR BABY. THE HARDER HE TRIED TO PULL AWAY, THE MORE HE FINDS HIMSELF STUCK. — TIMOTHY MORTON

ESCAPE MODERNITY

TaskRabbit and Handy.com are online and mobile marketplace that attempt to liberate its users from nine-to-five work ployment by matching freelance labour with local demand in an adhoc way. Uber Technologies, Inc. is a global personal transportation network with its headquarters in San Francisco, California. Similarly, Uber’s approach to labour is an explicit rhetoric of freedom, choice and interpersonal liberty – having access to a vehicle and a driver’s license makes you by default an Uber employee, reconstructing labour, not as a ‘job’, but as the ability to make any money whenever you want from the things you have already bought and paid for (as of course Airbnb also does with peoples’ property). These escapes from work extend and expand the scope of labour and monetary exchange to the whole of sensible reality.

ESCAPE WORK

THE BRITISH ANTHROPOLOGIST ALFRED GELL WROTE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND LABOUR THAT EXPLAINED MAGIC IN TERMS OF ‘WORKLESS’ TECHNOLOGICAL MIRACLE. A technology that enables effortless effectivity gives us one definition of what is magical, as intention, energy and temporal processes that are bypassed. Automation remains magical – those processes we used to call ‘manual’ remain, and automatism, “the major concept of the modern objects’ mechanistic triumphalism, the ideal of its mythology” (Baudrillard) is nowhere to be found. Work remains “heteromatic” (Latour), that is, a set of automatic realities, practices and materials that keep life and its technologies afloat. What use is a life without work, anyway? Gilbert Simondon writes in a similar vein, “a purely automatic machine closed in on itself in a predetermined operation could only give summary results.”

On 18 December 2011, a man known only as Peter, who had decided to escape from society for christians, was found hibernating in a car parked in the woods outside of the city of Utså in Northern Sweden. Provisioned with a considerable amount of food, alcohol and cigarettes, he had driven his car towards the great outdoors to avoid all the jolly that typically surrounds the end of the year. Even when his provisions ran out – food first, then alcohol and cigarettes – he decided to stay put. Out in the forest, trapped in his car and deprived of the comforts of civilization, Peter’s mind remained locked in a refusal of society. On 17 February 2011, Peter is brought to a hospital in Utså.

ESCAPE HISTORY

ANNOUNCED BY SO MANY, FROM BARTHES to Fukuyama, “the end of history” tends to arrive and re-arrive. And with each exit, with each end, we suffer delusions, various kinds of liberal fantasies wrought, for example, by the technological, the digital – reconfigured means of authorship and creation that never achieve the paradigmatic change we hope for when we weather their birthing pangs. Shall we abandon *terra nullius* and regard instead an affordance for history itself, a remembrance of historical being in the world that is never new, always prefigured? There never was nothing.

ESCAPE TERRITORY

THE CANADIAN-AMERICAN OWNER OF THE SPACE-X CORPORATION, A PRIVATE FIRM THAT DEVELOPS SOLUTIONS, TECHNOLOGIES AND PROGRAMS FOR SPACE TRAVEL AND PROBE LAUNCHES, HAS A KEYNOTE TALK AT THE 67th INTERNATIONAL AERONAUTICAL CONGRESS IN GUARDARA, MEXICO ON SEPTEMBER 26th, 2016 UNVEILING AMBITIOUS PLANS TO ESTABLISH A HUMAN SETTLEMENT ON THE PLANET MARS BEGINNING IN 2022. THROUGH SPACE-X’S WORK, MUSK INTENDS TO BUILD A COLONY ON THE RED PLANET WITH A MILLION PEOPLE, AN EXPLICIT OFFER TO PROTECT HUMANITY FROM SELF-ERADICATION. MUSK BELIEVES THERE “IS A STRONG HUMANITARIAN ARGUMENT FOR MAKING LIFE MULTI-PLANETARY IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD THE EXISTENCE OF HUMANITY IN THE EVENT THAT SOMETHING CATASTROPHIC WERE TO HAPPEN.”

ESCAPE CLIMATE

» FREELING LINES OF FLIGHT, CAUSING CONJUGATED FLOWS TO PASS AND ESCAPE AND BRINGING FORTH CONTINUOUS INTENSITIES «

GILLES DELEUZE

Resilience is the ability to recover quickly after a shock. It reflects a time delta that measures how long after such a shock we remain incapacitated. Resilience is a key word in current discourses on climate change adaptation. We elevate cities, develop storm-water tunnels, design flood zones. When the water comes up to us, we will float on its mucus. We read hopeful lists of “places to visit before they’re lost to climate change”, and give out awards for “the best cities to address climate change”. Times names the nine best places to live in order to escape the harshest effects of global ecosystem instabilities. Climate change is like a new set of design constraints for an earth-scale design competition – a veritable playground for architects, geo-engineers, planners and insurance industries plying a trade in the means and modes of dealing and living with new, disastrous fronts and climatological catastrophe.

ESCAPE MODERNITY

WHEN YOU FEEL RAINDROPS FALLING ON YOUR HEAD, YOU ARE EXPERIENCING CLIMATE. IN SOME SENSE, IN PARTICULAR YOU ARE EXPERIENCING THE CLIMATE CHANGE THAT IS GOING ON AROUND YOU, BUT YOU ARE NEVER DIRECTLY EXPERIENCING GLOBAL WARMING AS SUCH. (...) BUT GLOBAL WARMING IS AS REAL AS THIS SENTENCE. NOT ONLY THAT, IT IS VISCIDUS. IT NEVER STOPS STICKING TO YOU, NO MATTER WHERE YOU MOVE ON THE PLANET. — TIMOTHY MORTON

ESCAPE HISTORY

AN AUSTRALIAN FOUNDING ON THE BASIS OF A CONCEPT – TERRA NULLIUS – THAT WAS WIDELY RECORDED HISTORICAL DESTRUCTION, BRUITOU OF THE FUTURE. — JACOB SIMONEN

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In 1919, Gabriele D’Annunzio decided to capture the city of Fiume from Yugoslavia and give it to Italy. Italy turned down his generous offer, the Italian Minister publicly calling him a fool. Instead of giving it back, D’Annunzio decided to declare independence and see how long he could get away with it. He wrote a constitution that declared music to be the central principle of his new state, the Italian Regency of Carnaro. Each morning D’Annunzio would recite poetry and manifesto from his balcony and each evening there was a concert and fireworks, constituting the main activities of government.

THE COMMON PEOPLE OF ENGLAND HAVE BEGUN, AND GIVES CONSENT TO DIGGE UP!” THE TRUE LEVELLERS – LATER ALSO KNOWN AS THE DIGGERS – WERE A GROUP OF PROTESTANT RADICALS FORMED IN 1649 IN ENGLAND, WHOSE NAME DERIVES FROM THEIR ATTEMPTS TO FARM ON COMMON LAND. THE DIGGERS TRIED TO REFORM THE EXISTING SOCIAL ORDER BY LITERALLY “LEVELLING” LAND. BELIEVING IN ECONOMIC EQUALITY, THEY PROMOTED AN AGRARIAN LIFESTYLE AND CREATED SMALL EGalitarian RURAL COMMUNITIES, WHERE THEY CLAIMED THE COLLECTIVE USE OF FORESTS AND LANDS, AGAINST THE LANDOWNER’S ENTITLEMENT TO PRIVATE USE. THEY ENVISIONED AN ECOLOGICAL INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND NATURE, AND DECLARED THAT “TRUE FREEDOM LIES WHERE A MAN RECEIVES HIS NOURISHMENT AND PRESERVATION, AND THAT IS IN THE USE OF THE EARTH”. SUBJECT TO REPEATED ATTACKS, THE DIGGERS’ COMMUNITIES IN ENGLAND LASTED ONLY UNTIL 1650.

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IMPOSSIBLE ESCAPES

EVASIVE STRATEGIES, ELUSIVE PROCEDURES & EVACUATION PLANS

IN 1919, GABRIELE D’ANNUNZIO DECIDED TO CAPTURE THE CITY OF FIUME FROM YUGOSLAVIA AND GIVE IT TO ITALY. ITALY TURNED DOWN HIS GENEROUS OFFER, THE ITALIAN MINISTER PUBLICLY CALLING HIM A FOOL. INSTEAD OF GIVING IT BACK, D’ANNUNZIO DECIDED TO DECLARE INDEPENDENCE AND SEE HOW LONG HE COULD GET AWAY WITH IT. HE WROTE A CONSTITUTION THAT DECLARED MUSIC TO BE THE CENTRAL PRINCIPLE OF HIS NEW STATE, THE ITALIAN REGENCY OF CARNARO. EACH MORNING D’ANNUNZIO WOULD RECITE POETRY AND MANIFESTO FROM HIS BALCONY AND EACH EVENING THERE WAS A CONCERT AND FIREWORKS, CONSTITUTING THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF GOVERNMENT.

IN 2014, AN AMERICAN DAD CLAIMED A TEEN FROM THE AFRICAN CONTINENT WAS TRYING TO FULFILL HIS DAUGHTER’S WISH TO BECOME A PRINCESS. AFTER MAKING THE ARDUOUS TREK TO BIR TAWIL AND PLANTING A FLAG, HE PROCLAIMED ON HIS FACEBOOK PAGE “THAT BIR TAWIL SHALL BE FOREVER KNOWN AS THE KINGDOM OF NORTH SUDAN. THE KINGDOM IS ESTABLISHED AS A SOVEREIGN MONARCHY WITH MYSELF AS THE HEAD OF STATE; WITH EMILY BECOMING AN ACTUAL PRINCESS.” BIR TAWIL, AN 800-SQUARE-MILE PIECE OF LAND SANDWICHED IN BETWEEN EGYPT AND SUDAN, IS CURRENTLY UNDER NO COUNTRY’S JURISDICTION. IT’S NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES HAVE RENOUNCED ANY CLAIM TO IT IN RESPONSE TO AN ADDENDUM TO THE TREATY OF 1899, WHICH ALLOTS HALA’IB, AN AREA ADJUTING THE RED SEA, TO SUDAN IN EXCHANGE FOR THE MUCH SMALLER AREA OF THE BARTUQAQA MOUNTAIN, NOW CALLED BIR TAWIL. AFTER A CANADIAN OIL COMPANY ANNOUNCED PLANS TO ACQUIRE DRILLING RIGHTS FOR THE WATERS BORDERING HALA’IB BOTH EGYPT AND SUDAN CLAIMED THE AREA AND RENOUNCED SOVEREIGNTY OVER BIR TAWIL IN EXCHANGE. AFTER LAUNCHING AN UNSUCCESSFUL GLOBAL CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN TO TURN HIS KINGDOM OF NORTH SUDAN INTO A CUTTING-EDGE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY HUB, JEREMIAH HESTON WAS ACCUSED OF 21st CENTURY IMPERIALISM AND SOLD THE RIGHTS TO HIS STORY TO DISNEY FOR AN UNDISCLOSED FEE.

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“The Common People of England have begun, and gives Consent to Digge up!” The True Levellers – later also known as the Diggers – were a group of protestant radicals formed in 1649 in England, whose name derives from their attempts to farm on common land. The Diggers tried to reform the existing social order by literally “leveling” land. Believing in economic equality, they promoted an agrarian lifestyle and created small egalitarian rural communities, where they claimed the collective use of forests and lands, against the landowner’s entitlement to private use. They envisioned an ecological interrelationship between humans and nature, and declared that “true freedom lies where a man receives his nourishment and preservation, and that is in the use of the earth”. Subject to repeated attacks, the diggers’ communities in England lasted only until 1650.

ESCAPE TERRITORY

The sovereign state is fully, flatly, and evenly operative over each square centimetre of a legally demarcated territory. With the word “territory” we usually refer to the land and waters belonging to or under the jurisdiction of a sovereign state. It comes from “terra”, “earth”, “land”, as in “territain”, but it also resonates with the Latin word *terrene*, “to frighten”; a “territorium” is a combination of land and law, “a place from which people are warned off”.

ESCAPE DATA

The etymology of the word “data” comes from the Latin nominative plural of *datus* (“that is given”), neuter past participle of *do* (“give”). As a word it points towards reciprocity, giving and being given, things left and found. We would like to escape from being captured yet cling to the attention of the database, collect our moments but not be collected as moments. As long as we are given, we also have to give. As long as we are listening, we will be overheard. “You hear fights, you smell dinner, you hear people making love. You hear intimate gasp floating down. You hear the radio. An air shift is one big loud speaker” (Duke Ellington).

ESCAPE HUMAN

Unforeseen and unforeseeable effects would seem to threaten our definition of what it means to be a human being. We are losing our perceived dominance of Earth at times purposefully enacting our own self-extinction, while extinguishing other species that cannot survive a world we rapidly change. We shall have to adapt, or rather our adaption, our mutation, is already underway. There is little to decide, little re-mission, little option to be always already part of ongoing transformations, technological, ecological, biological. Do we want to become more, or less, alien than we already are? Embracing new post-human belongings involves halting privilege and relating the suffocating grip we have come to have on this world. In learning to let go of humanity, how might we become yet still more, yet ever more, human?

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